

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims below will replace all prior versions and listings in the Application.

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 5 1. (amended) A method for billing a Buyer for telecommunication service provided by a first
Provider of a plurality of telecommunication Providers in accordance with a bidding
process involving a central processor, referred to as a Moderator, comprising the steps of:
- 10 a. in the Buyer, formulating a request for telecommunication service over at least one
route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network during
at least one specific future time interval and transmitting the request to the Moderator;
- b. in the Moderator, processing the request and distributing a processed request to a
plurality of telecommunication Providers;
- c. in at least a portion of the plurality of telecommunication Providers, receiving the
processed request, formulating bids in response to the processed request and
15 transmitting the bids, including economic incentive data, to the Moderator;
- d. in the Moderator, receiving the bids, processing the bids to produce processed bid data,
and storing the bids and the processed bid data in a data base of the Moderator as first
bidding data;
- e. in the Moderator, transmitting at least a portion of the first bidding data to at least [the]
20 a portion of the plurality of telecommunication Providers;
- f. in the Moderator, designating at least the first Provider to provide telecommunication
service over the at least one route or the at least one route segment;
- g. in the Moderator, processing at least a portion of the information contained in the
request, the identity of the Buyer submitting the request, the identity of the first

Provider fulfilling the request, and at least a portion of the economic incentive data included with the bid transmitted by the first Provider to the Moderator in response to the request, to produce a billing record and storing the billing record in a billing database; and

- 5 h. in the Moderator, processing the billing record to generate a bill for telecommunication service associated with the request.

Claims 2-7 (previously deleted).

- 10 8. (amended) A method of claim 1 in which at least a portion of the processing [and] or communication functions of the Moderator [are] is performed by an adjunct computer.

Claims 9 – 45 (previously deleted).

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46. (amended) A method for creating a bidding process among telecommunication Providers in which a moderating computer collects bids from [each Provider of a plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers, processes the bids and designates at least one Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers to provide telecommunication service, wherein the method comprises:

- a. in the moderating computer, receiving bids to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network, processing the bids to produce processed bid data, and storing the bids and the processed bid data in a data base of the moderating computer as first bidding data;
- b. in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers; and
- c. in the moderating computer, designating at least one Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network.

47. A method of Claim 46 in which the processed bid data includes Provider designation data.

48. A method of Claim 47 in which the Provider designation data includes designation of the first designated Provider.

49. A method of Claim 47 in which the Provider designation data includes designation of at least one alternate Provider.

5 50. (amended) A method of Claim 47 in which the moderating computer, or a computer adjunct to the moderating computer, transmits at least a portion of the Provider designation data to at least one telecommunication switch, or to a computer adjunct to the at least one telecommunication switch, for use in routing at least one call attempt.

10 51. (amended) A method of Claim 46 in which [at least] the first designated Provider is a default Provider or a contract Provider.

52. (amended) A method of Claim 46 in which at least one adjunct computer performs at least a portion of the processing [and] or communications functions of the moderating
15 computer.

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53. (amended) A method for creating a bidding process among telecommunication Providers

in which a moderating computer collects bids from [each Provider of a plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers, processes the bids and designates at least one

Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers to provide telecommunication service, wherein the method comprises:

a. in the moderating computer, receiving bids to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one

telecommunication network, processing the bids to produce processed bid data, and

storing the bids and the processed bid data in a data base of the moderating computer as first bidding data;

b. in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers;

c. in the moderating computer, designating at least one Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide

telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network;

d. in the moderating computer, transmitting Provider designation data to at least one telecommunication switch; and

e. in the at least one telecommunication switch, routing at least one call attempt in accordance with the Provider designation data.

54. A method of Claim 53 in which the Provider designation data includes designation of at least one alternate Provider.

55. (amended) A method of Claim 53 in which bidding rules specify that all bids indicate [a]

5 at least one specific future time interval during which the telecommunication service is to be provided.

56. (amended) A method of Claim 53 including, in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first bidding data to [the] at least one end user or to at least one
10 reseller.

57. A method of Claim 53 comprising, in the moderating computer, receiving decision rules from an administrator associated with the moderating computer or from an administrator associated with at least one subscribing switch or from at least one end user or from at
15 least one reseller, processing at least a portion of the first bidding data and at least a portion of the decision rules, and designating at least the first designated Provider for the provision of telecommunication service.

58. (amended) A method of Claim 53 in which the moderating computer transmits at least a
20 portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers subsequent to designating [at least] the first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service.

59. (amended) A method of Claim 53 in which [at least] the first designated Provider is a default Provider or a contract Provider.

5 60. (amended) A method of Claim 53 in which one or more adjunct computers perform at least a portion of the processing [and] or communications functions of the moderating computer or the at least one telecommunication switch.

61. A method of claim 53 in which the moderating computer or the at least one
10 telecommunication switch is operated by a local access telecommunication service provider.

62. A method of Claim 53 comprising, in the moderating computer, processing the bids in accordance with bidding rules to produce processed bid data.

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63. (amended) A method for creating a bidding process among telecommunication Providers in which a moderating computer collects bids from [each Provider of a plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers, processes the bids and communicates with a first subscribing switch, thereby enabling the first subscribing switch to designate at least one Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers to provide telecommunication service, wherein the method comprises:

- a. in the moderating computer, receiving bids to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network, processing the bids to produce processed bid data, and storing the bids and the processed bid data in a data base of the moderating computer as first switch data;
- b. in the moderating computer or the first subscribing switch, transmitting at least a first portion of the first switch data to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers;
- c. in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a second portion of the first switch data to the first subscribing switch;
- d. in the first subscribing switch, designating at least one Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network; and
- e. in the first subscribing switch, routing at least one call attempt in accordance with Provider designation data.

64. (amended) A method of Claim 63 in which the first portion of the first switch data is the same as the second portion of the first switch data, or in which the first portion includes the second portion of the first switch data, or in which the first portion is included in the second portion of the first switch data.

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65. A method of Claim 63 in which the moderating computer is a computer adjunct to the first subscribing switch.

66. A method of Claim 63 in which the first subscribing switch is operated by the moderating
10 computer, or by an administrator associated with the moderating computer, or by at least one end user, or by at least one reseller, or by a local access telecommunication service provider.

67. A method of Claim 63 comprising, in the first subscribing switch, receiving decision
15 rules from an administrator associated with the moderating computer or from an administrator associated with the first subscribing switch or from at least one end user or from at least one reseller, processing at least the second portion of the first switch data and at least a portion of the decision rules, and designating at least the first designated Provider for the provision of telecommunication service.

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Claim 68 (deleted).

69. (amended) A method of Claim 63 in which the first subscribing switch designates at least
[onr] one alternate Provider.

70. (amended) A method of Claim 63 in which the moderating computer or the first

5 subscribing switch transmits at least the first portion of the first switch data to at least a
portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers subsequent to the
first subscribing switch designating [at least] the first designated Provider to provide
telecommunication service.

10 71. (amended) A method of Claim 63 in which at least a portion of the processing [and] or
communications functions of the moderating computer or the first subscribing switch
[are] is performed by one or more adjunct computers.

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72. (amended) A bidding Moderator for enabling designation of at least one Provider of a plurality of telecommunication Providers for the provision of telecommunication service, comprising:

a. a computer with a processor and a memory;

b. means for receiving, from [each Provider of a plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers, bids to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network;

c. means for processing the bids to produce processed bid data, and storing the bids and the processed bid data in the memory as first bidding data;

d. means for transmitting at least a first portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers; and

e. means for [transmitting at least a second portion of the first bidding data to at least one telecommunication switch for use in routing at least one call attempt] designating at least one Provider of the at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network.

73. (amended) A Moderator of Claim 72 including means for [making the first portion of the first bidding data the same as the second portion of the first bidding data, or for including the second portion of the first bidding data in the first portion of the first bidding data, or for including the first portion of the first bidding data in the second portion of the first bidding data] transmitting at least a second portion of the first bidding data, including Provider designation data, to at least one telecommunication switch for use in routing at least one call attempt.

74. (amended) A Moderator of Claim [72] 73 including means for [designating at least one
Provider of the plurality of telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to
provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment,
on at least one telecommunication network, and including means for including Provider
designation data in at least the second portion of the first bidding data] making the first
portion of the first bidding data the same as the second portion of the first bidding data, or
for including the second portion of the first bidding data in the first portion of the first
bidding data, or for including the first portion of the first bidding data in the second
portion of the first bidding data.

75. (amended) A Moderator of Claim [74] 73 in which the Provider designation data includes
designation of at least one alternate Provider.

76. (amended) A Moderator of Claim 72 including means for receiving decision rules from an
administrator associated with the Moderator or from at least one administrator associated
with the at least one [subscribing] telecommunication switch or from at least one end user
or from at least one reseller, and applying at least a portion of the decision rules to at least
a portion of the first bidding data to designate at least the first designated Provider for the
provision of telecommunication service.

Claim 77 (deleted).

78. (amended) A Moderator of Claim 72 including means for transmitting at least the first portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers subsequent to the designating of [at least] the first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service.

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Claim 79 (deleted).

80. (amended) A Moderator of Claim 72 including means for at least one adjunct computer to perform at least a portion of the processing [and] or communications functions of the Moderator.

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81. A Moderator of Claim 72 including means for processing the bids in accordance with bidding rules to produce processed bid data.

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82. (amended) A method for conducting an automated bidding process among a plurality of telecommunication Providers, comprising:

- a. [collecting] receiving, from [each Provider of a plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers, bids to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network;
- b. processing the bids to produce processed bid information;
- c. distributing at least a first portion of the processed bid information to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers;
- d. transmitting at least a second portion of the processed bid information to at least one telecommunication switch;
- e. designating at least one Provider of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network; and
- f. routing at least one call attempt over the at least one route or the at least one route segment in accordance with the designating of at least the [second portion of the processed bid information] first designated Provider.

83. A method of Claim 82 in which each of Steps a. - f. is accomplished by means of computer processing.

84. (amended) A method of Claim 82 in which the first portion of the processed bid information is the same as the second portion of the processed bid information, or in which the first portion includes the second portion of the processed bid information, or in which the first portion is included in the second portion of the processed bid information.

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85. (amended) A method of Claim 82 in which at least the first portion of the processed bid information is distributed to at least a portion of the [plurality of] at least two telecommunication Providers subsequent to the designating of [at least] the first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service.

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86. (amended) A method of Claim 82 in which the designating of [at least] the first designated Provider is performed by a moderating computer or by the at least one telecommunication switch or by at least one computer adjunct to the moderating computer or adjunct to the at least one telecommunication switch.

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87. A method of Claim 82 in which at least a portion of the bidding process of Steps a. through f. is conducted in accordance with bidding rules.

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88. (new) A method for conducting an automated bidding process among a plurality of telecommunication Providers, comprising:

- a. receiving, from a Buyer, a request for telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network;
- b. processing the request and distributing a processed request to a plurality of telecommunication Providers;
- c. receiving, from at least two telecommunication Providers, bids to provide the telecommunication service described in the request;
- d. processing the bids to produce processed bid information;
- e. distributing at least a portion of the processed bid information to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers; and
- f. designating at least one Provider of the at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide the telecommunication service described in the request.

89. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which the processed bid data includes Provider designation data.

90. (new) A method of Claim 89 in which the Provider designation data includes designation of the first designated Provider.

91. (new) A method of Claim 89 in which the Provider designation data includes designation of at least one alternate Provider.

92. (new) A method of Claim 89 in which a moderating computer, or a computer adjunct to
5 the moderating computer, transmits at least a portion of the Provider designation data to at least one telecommunication switch, or to a computer adjunct to the at least one telecommunication switch, for use in routing at least one call attempt.

93. (new) A method of Claim 92 in which the designating of the first designated Provider is
10 performed by the moderating computer or by the at least one telecommunication switch or by at least one computer adjunct to the moderating computer or adjunct to the at least one telecommunication switch.

94. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which at least a portion of the processed bid information
15 is distributed to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers subsequent to the designating of the first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service.

95. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which at least a portion of the bidding process of Steps a.
20 through f. is conducted in accordance with bidding rules.

96. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which each of Steps a. - f. is accomplished by means of computer processing.

97. (new) A method of Claim 88 comprising, in a moderating computer, receiving decision rules from an administrator associated with the moderating computer or from an administrator associated with at least one telecommunication switch or from at least one Buyer, processing at least a portion of the first bidding data and at least a portion of the decision rules, and designating at least the first designated Provider for the provision of telecommunication service.

98. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which the Buyer submits the request to a moderating computer by entering request data into a first software defined template residing on a computer bulletin board system or on a website.

99. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which request data comprises a plurality of the following elements: end points of the route or route segment; a specific future time interval; required transport capacity; required quality of service criteria; a set of acceptable Providers; and a maximum acceptable price.

100. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which a moderating computer, or a computer adjunct to the moderating computer, distributes the processed request to at least a portion of the plurality of telecommunication Providers by posting the processed request on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the plurality of telecommunication Providers.

101. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which one or more Providers of the at least two telecommunication Providers submits one or more bids by entering bid data into a second software defined template residing on a computer bulletin board system or on a website.

5 102. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which a moderating computer, or a computer adjunct to the moderating computer, distributes at least a portion of the processed bid information to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers by posting at least a portion of the processed bid information on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers.

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103. (new) A method of Claim 88 in which at least a first Provider of the at least two telecommunication Providers transmits to a moderating computer a pre-request submission, including response criteria, for use by the moderating computer as a bid by the at least a first Provider in response to one or more future requests for telecommunication service meeting the response criteria.

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104. (new) A bidding Moderator for enabling designation of at least one Provider of a plurality of telecommunication Providers for the provision of telecommunication service, comprising:

- a. a computer with a processor and a memory;
- 5 b. means for receiving a request from a Buyer for telecommunication service over at least one route, or at least one route segment, on at least one telecommunication network;
- c. means for processing the request and distributing a processed request to a plurality of telecommunication Providers;
- 10 d. means for receiving, from at least two telecommunication Providers, bids to provide the telecommunication service described in the request;
- e. means for processing the bids to produce processed bid data, and storing the bids and the processed bid data in the memory as first bidding data;
- f. means for transmitting at least a first portion of the first bidding data to at least a
- 15 portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers; and
- g. means for designating at least one Provider of the at least two telecommunication Providers as a first designated Provider to provide the telecommunication service described in the request.

20 105. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for transmitting at least a second portion of the first bidding data, including Provider designation data, to at least one telecommunication switch for use in routing at least one call attempt.

106. (new) A Moderator of Claim 105 including means for making the first portion of the first bidding data the same as the second portion of the first bidding data, or for including the second portion of the first bidding data in the first portion of the first bidding data, or for including the first portion of the first bidding data in the second portion of the first bidding data.

107. (new) A Moderator of Claim 105 in which the Provider designation data includes designation of at least one alternate Provider.

108. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for receiving decision rules from an administrator associated with the Moderator or from at least one administrator associated with the at least one telecommunication switch or from at least one Buyer, and for applying at least a portion of the decision rules to at least a portion of the first bidding data to designate at least the first designated Provider for the provision of telecommunication service.

109. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for transmitting at least the first portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers subsequent to the designating of a first designated Provider to provide telecommunication service.

110. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for at least one adjunct computer to perform at least a portion of the processing or communications functions of the Moderator or the at least one telecommunications switch.

5 111. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for processing the bids in accordance with bidding rules to produce processed bid data.

10 112. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 comprising a first software defined template, residing on a computer bulletin board system or on a website, for entry of request data by the Buyer.

15 113. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for receiving request data comprising a plurality of the following elements: end points of the route or route segment; a specific future time interval; required transport capacity; required quality of service criteria; a set of acceptable Providers; and a maximum acceptable price.

20 114. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for distributing the processed request to at least a portion of the plurality of telecommunication Providers by posting the processed request on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the plurality of telecommunication Providers.

115. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 comprising a second software defined template,
residing on a computer bulletin board system or on a website, for receiving bids from one
or more Providers of the at least two telecommunication Providers.

5 116. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for transmitting at least a portion of
the first bidding data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers
by posting at least a portion of the first bidding data on a computer bulletin board system
or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication
Providers.

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117. (new) A Moderator of Claim 104 including means for receiving, from at least a first
Provider of the at least two telecommunication Providers, a pre-request submission,
including response criteria, for use by the Moderator as a bid by the at least a first
Provider in response to one or more future requests for telecommunication service
15 meeting the response criteria.

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118. (new) A method of Claim 46 in which the moderating computer transmits at least a
portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication
Providers subsequent to designating the first designated Provider to provide
20 telecommunication service.

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119. (new) A method of Claim 46 in which the moderating computer transmits at least a portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers by posting at least a portion of the first bidding data on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers.

120. (new) A method of Claim 53 in which the moderating computer transmits at least a portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers by posting at least a portion of the first bidding data on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers.

121. (new) A method of Claim 63 in which the moderating computer or the first subscribing switch transmits at least a first portion of the first switch data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers by posting at least a first portion of the first switch data on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers.

122. (new) A Moderator of Claim 72 including means for transmitting at least a first portion of the first bidding data to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers by posting at least a first portion of the first bidding data on a computer bulletin board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers.

123. (new) A method of Claim 82 in which a moderating computer, or a computer adjunct to
the moderating computer, distributes at least a first portion of the processed bid
information to at least a portion of the at least two telecommunication Providers by
5 posting at least a first portion of the processed bid information on a computer bulletin
board system or on a website accessible to at least a portion of the at least two
telecommunication Providers.